

- I. My Notes ... WWC message 1/10
- II. Series: Practicing What We Believe
 - Title: Living by a Faith That Listens
 - Text: John 10:1-5; Romans 10:17; 1 Samuel 3:1-10
 - Quote: The same letters are used to spell “listen” and “silent” ... Pastor Rick
- III. Introduction
 - I am about to point out something that is obvious to some and to others it seems commonplace. We live in a world that is louder than any generation before us. Each day we are bombarded with notifications, headlines, opinions, advertisements, and expectations. Our minds are full, our calendars are full, and our hearts are often full of noise.
 - And here’s the tension:
 - Faith cannot grow in constant noise.
 - Faith grows in attention. Faith grows in listening.
 - This tension, this continued barrage of noise—news alerts, opinions, expectations, and the constant hum of our own thoughts—echoes throughout each day. And in the middle of all that noise, Jesus says something stunning in **John 10:27** ... *“My sheep hear my voice, I know them, and they follow me.” (CSB)*. Pay attention to His words - Not might hear... Not should hear... Do hear. Jesus is stating that His voice is recognizable to His people. But if we’re honest, many of us struggle to hear God not because He’s silent, but because we’re distracted.
 - It’s a lot like being in a busy airport terminal. You have made all the preparations, left to get to the airport in plenty of time, and made it through the security checkpoints. Heading to your gate there are constant announcements, it is a lot of noise. But if you aren’t listening, you can miss the delay or gate change and end up missing your flight and not getting to your destination. Spiritually, many of us are living in a condition of not paying attention to what is being said because of the tremendous amount of noise. It is not because God isn’t speaking, but because the noise around us and within us is drowning out His voice.
 - Scripture tells us in **Romans 10:17** that *“faith comes by hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ.” (ESV)*. Faith grows when we listen. Faith matures when we tune our hearts to the Shepherd’s voice. And faith becomes active when we respond to what we hear. So today, we’re stepping into a simple but transformative truth: faith that is alive and vibrant begins with faith that listens. God is speaking. The question is whether we’ve created enough stillness, enough margin, enough attention to hear Him.
- IV. The Sheep

- **John 10:1-5 CSB**

10 “Truly I tell you, anyone who doesn’t enter the sheep pen by the gate but climbs in some other way is a thief and a robber. 2 The one who enters by the gate is the shepherd of the sheep. 3 The gatekeeper opens it for him, and the sheep hear his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. 4 When he has brought all his own outside, he goes ahead of them. The sheep follow him because they know his voice. 5 They will never follow a stranger; instead they will run away from him, because they don’t know the voice of strangers.”

- The noise that surrounds us is distracting. It creates an environment where anxiety, stress, and hurry are the components that must be addressed. I’m going to say something that some would disagree with, but it is worth considering ... Noise pulls us away from relationships, especially our relationship with the Lord God.
- I look at this passage and see the thief and the robber as creating distraction and disruption to try to get into the place where they are “resting.” These distractions take the attention of the sheep away from the Shepherd.
- The solution – pay attention to the Shepherd, listen to His voice.
- I have learned something while reading and preparing for this message. In a Middle Eastern marketplace, shepherds often gather their flocks into a shared pen while they shop. Three or four flocks all combined together in a singular location — sheep everywhere. When it’s time to leave, each shepherd goes to a different corner of the pen and simply calls. No sorting. No pushing. No chaos.

And something remarkable happens:

The sheep lift their heads, recognize the voice they trust, and move toward it — even through the noise. The issue is not the surrounding (and excessive) noise. The issue is the voice you’ve trained your heart to follow.

V. Can You Hear Him?

- Jesus is still speaking. The same Shepherd who called fishermen by the Sea of Galilee, who spoke peace to storms, who whispered hope to the brokenhearted — He has not gone silent. **Hebrews 1:1–2** tells us, *“Long ago God spoke to our ancestors by the prophets at different times and in different ways. In these last days, he has spoken to us by his Son. God has appointed him heir of all things and made the universe through him.” (CSB)*. Pay close attention to what the writer of Hebrews is saying ... Not “used to speak.” Not “once spoke.” Has spoken — and continues to speak — through Jesus.
- And how does He speak today? The first place that we should take a look is through His Word.
- **2 Timothy 3:16** reminds us that *“All Scripture is God-breathed.”* When you open your Bible, you are not reading ancient ink on ancient pages — you are

hearing the living breath of God. Jesus said in **John 6:63**, *“It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh is no help at all. The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life.”* (ESV). His Word is dynamic; it is living, effective, and relevant to the current moment.

- Jesus also speaks through the Holy Spirit. In **John 14:26**, Jesus promised, *“But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and remind you of everything I have told you.”* (CSB). The Spirit does not bring new doctrine — He brings fresh clarity. The Holy Spirit reminds us of the words of Jesus at the exact moment you need them. He convicts (John 16:8), He guides (John 16:13), and He testifies to the truth (John 15:26).
- Our Lord continues to speak in a variety of ways. It is up to us to listen, to pay attention.
- We can see Him speak through creation. **Psalms 19:1** declares, *“The heavens declare the glory of God, and the expanse proclaims the work of his hands.”* (CSB). Each sunrise, every star, gazing at a mountain is a sermon reminding all believers of God’s power, His majesty, and His faithful love for all of us.
- We can hear the voice of the Lord through conviction. Understand the difference between condemnation — conviction. **Romans 8:1** assures us, *“So now there is no condemnation for those who belong to Christ Jesus.”* (NLT). Condemnation pushes you away from God. Conviction draws you back to Him. One is the voice of the enemy; the other is the voice of the Shepherd calling you home. Earlier in this letter to believers in Rome, the Apostle writes, *“But God showed his great love for us by sending Christ to die for us while we were still sinners. And since we have been made right in God’s sight by the blood of Christ, he will certainly save us from God’s condemnation.”* (Romans 5:8-9 NLT).
- In Scripture we can find that silence is linked with reverence, reflection, and deeply listening to God’s voice. It’s a choice we make to be silent and sit at the feet of Jesus. By doing so we create space to hear His gentle whisper. This is something that Elijah recognized after the mighty wind, earthquake, and fire (1 Kings 19:11-13). This choice of silence, of stillness is a sincere step of faith — it is trusting that God is at work even when the answers aren’t obvious or close at hand. There were times that Jesus sought silence. Moments that He withdrew from the crowds to spend time in communication with the Father (Mark 1:35 is one such example). It’s an understanding that by getting away from the noise and activity that surrounds us, we can find spiritual strength and gain clarity by spending time listening to God.

VI. Recognizing God’s Voice

- I think I have been able to point out that our Lord is speaking. And earlier there was a reminder that our faith is found in “hearing” (Look again at Romans

10:17). So, the follow-up question is one that becomes deeply personal ... How do you know that it is God speaking?

- Look back at the beginning of our story. In the Garden, Adam and Eve walked and talked with the Lord (look back at Genesis 3). They heard the voice of God; they spent time with Him. Yet, when Satan twisted God's words, they choose to listen to that voice. It is a strong lesson for us to learn to listen to the "right" voice, to God's voice.
- Following His baptism, Jesus spent 40 days alone in the desert. During this time Satan came to Him to try to get acknowledgment, to gain control. Satan quoted Scripture and put his twist on it. Jesus responded rightly, He acted in a way that honored and worshiped God. Jesus knew God's voice, He wasn't fooled by the Devil's twists and illusions.
- James, in discussing what faith looks like, stated – "*You believe that God is one; you do well. Even the demons believe—and shudder!*" (**James 2:19 ESV**). They have seen, heard, and know God's truth. It causes them to tremble.
- We all have those "voices" that speak to us. Some come from the past, some come from what we see and hear around us, and some can come from places meant to confuse and distract us. We need to learn what God's voice sounds like in our lives.
- This is called discernment and it matters. In **1 John 4:1** we are given words of encouragement. "*Dear friends, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see if they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world.*" (**CSB**). In other words, don't assume every thought, feeling, or impression is divine. God is speaking—but so is everything else. And if we're going to follow our Lord faithfully, we need to learn the sound of His voice.

VII. Familiarity

- Going back to the passage in John 10, Jesus said ... "*the sheep follow Him because they know His voice.*" (ref. John 10:4). Think about what that means. How do the sheep know the shepherd's voice? They have spent time with him. They listened to the sound of it. It is a mutual investment.
- Recognizing God's voice doesn't happen by accident. It is a commitment, a choice of time and attention. This investment in relationships is what allows growth and understanding.
- You all have seen what hearing the same voice looks like ... think about being at the park, near a playground. There is an abundance of noise and distractions. Suddenly, above the noise, you hear a cry or a call that you recognize instantly as your kid. It comes from time spent listening, it comes from moments invested in the relationship.
- There is a story in the Old Testament that fits this thought.

- 1 Samuel 3:1-10 young Samuel is serving in the Temple under the guidance of Eli, the High Priest. Samuel is in bed and he hears a voice call him ... *“Then the Lord called Samuel, and he answered, “Here I am.” (vs. 4 CSB).* Samuel ran to see what the High Priest needed. Eli hadn’t called Samuel. Scripture explains, *“Now Samuel did not yet know the Lord, because the word of the Lord had not yet been revealed to him.” (vs. 7 CSB).* This happened 3 times. Eli recognized that it was the Lord calling Samuel and told him so. *“Once again, for the third time, the Lord called Samuel. He got up, went to Eli, and said, “Here I am; you called me.” Then Eli understood that the Lord was calling the boy. He told Samuel, “Go and lie down. If he calls you, say, ‘Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening.’” So Samuel went and lay down in his place. The Lord came, stood there, and called as before, “Samuel, Samuel!” (vs. 8-10 CSB).*
- Samuel learned the Lord’s voice by instruction and repetition. He lived a life of faith, one that listened to the Lord and acted accordingly. It takes time and guidance to learn what God’s voice sounds like in your life.

VIII. Closing Thought

- If we want to become people who recognize our Lord’s (the Shepherd) voice, then we must build places in our day that make space for Him. Hearing God is not about mystical moments or spiritual elites—it’s about ordinary believers creating ordinary habits that open the heart to an extraordinary God. Let me give you a few simple, practical steps you can take to apply to your day during this week.
- Create a space for stillness ... Start with just two minutes. Prior to jumping into the business of your day - Before you read Scripture, before you pray, pause. Let the noise settle. Let your breathing slow. Let your heart become attentive. **Psalm 46:10** says, *“Be still, and know that I am God.” (NASB).* Stillness is not wasted time; it is sacred space.
- When you open your Bible, expect God to speak. Don’t read the Bible to “get through it.” Read it to hear God in it. Ask one simple question as you read: “Lord, what are You saying to me today?” Remember what we read earlier in Romans 10:17 that “faith comes by hearing.” Hearing begins with Scripture.
- Realize that through the noise you are going to hear God “calling” ...As you learn what God’s voice sounds like in your life, you will hear some small prompts:
 - the urge to encourage someone
 - the conviction to apologize
 - the reminder to pray
 - the sense of peace or unease
 - the Scripture that comes to mind unexpectedly

- These are often the gentle whispers of the Holy Spirit in our life. **Galatians 5:25** says, *“Since we are living by the Spirit, let us follow the Spirit’s leading in every part of our lives.” (NLT)*. Keeping in step is paying attention and paying attention starts with listening.
- Remember, our Lord isn’t trying to trip you up, to fool you into something that you should not be doing. He has your best interest in mind. His ways are always for our best.
- Let’s continue with some Scripture readings:
 - Day 1 – John 10:1-5
 - Day 2 – Psalm 46:10
 - Day 3 – 2 Timothy 3:16-17
 - Day 4 – 1 Kings 19: 11-13
 - Day 5 – John 14:26, 16:63
 - Day 6 – Colossians 3:14-16
 - Day 7 – James 1:22-25
- Before we rush back into the noise of life, let’s take a few moments of stillness right now. No words. No requests. Just listening. ‘Speak, Lord... Your servants are listening.’
- Let’s Pray
- Grace First, Grace Always